

# Abilene Public Library

Annual Report

2014



## Connecting to the Community



Staff of the Main Library

# Abilene Public Library - Year in Review

## From the City Librarian

Hello! I am honored to have been selected to be your City Librarian, and I am so proud of the wonderful work that my staff are doing in the community to further reading, education, and recreation through our library offerings. I am sharing with you all, via this new effort, an annual report for the Library, some of the wonderful things we have done over the past year.

On the following pages you will see information on each of our library sites, programs, staff and statistics that mark our latest year of service. Each page will underline for you our commitment to the Library Mission: To provide materials, services and programs to help community residents obtain information with meets their personal, educational, professional and recreational needs, with concern for all ages, backgrounds, interests, abilities and levels of education.

With the passing of City Librarian Ricki Brown, the Abilene community suffered an unexpected loss. Ricki Brown was instrumental in many innovative and creative activities in the community, both through her Library work and her participation with other community organizations. Over the year since her death the staff has pulled together as a strong team under the leadership of Lesli Andrews, Assistant Director of Community Services, and they have upheld the high standards you are all

accustomed to when you visit the library. I will be striving to fill her shoes as I get to know the Abilene community and its wonderful, friendly people.

Our Main Library facility is 55 years old now, and showing its age. We will be working in 2015 to re-arrange some of the spaces to provide better service, including opening the second floor to the public once again. We will hopefully be seeing an asbestos abatement project to make our building safer and allow us to make it cleaner and more pleasant for our library visitors. I apologize in advance for the disruption that accompanies such activity. We welcome you to participate in our efforts at any time by advocating for the needs of the library, joining the Abilene Friends of the Library, donating funds, time and/or talents in support of programming and services.

Most of all, we want to provide you with the services you want from us with excellence and dispatch. Help us make 2015 a successful one by visiting your local library branch, borrowing items, participating in our programs, and providing us with input on the things you want to see in our Library's future. We are here for you and are honored to serve your information needs.

Respectfully,

Lori Grumet  
City Librarian



## Library Advisory Board

The Library Advisory Board assists with the development of policy and direction for the future of the library. It is composed of volunteers from the community and meets at least four times per year.

### Your Library Board:

Rob Carleton, Chair  
Stan Chapman  
Dennis Regan  
Patricia Nail  
Debra Lillick  
Carrie Casada  
Tiffany Fink  
Joe Specht  
Virginia "Ginna" Sadler

Two positions are vacant, and the Library will be happy to take applications from any interested individuals who are at least 18 years of age and reside in the city limits.



**Rob Carleton, Board Chair**



# Information & Technical Services - Main Library

## Information Services

### Fast Facts:

Reference Questions  
Answered: 28,523

Computer use:  
97,517 sessions

Computers Terminals: 74

Book-a-Librarian  
Sessions: 32

Adult programs: 119  
Public Access

Adult Summer Reading:  
900 participants

Books on wheels:  
115 participants



Information Services staff are responsible for most of the adult programming the library offers to the public. In 2014, 119 programs were offered. Some of the topics included tax help, xeriscaping, genealogy, legal aid, small business development and marketing, history, health and successful strategies for garage sales.

IS staff also collaborate in putting on teen/adult programs like Lib-Con, its first ever mini comic convention April 28th through May 3rd celebrating anime, manga, comics, superheroes, and other pop culture. All three branches hosted a series of daily special events from martial arts instruction, button-making, cosplaying, and contests, with the greatest concentration of events on May 3rd. This was a very successful special event which will be repeated in 2015.

The library offers a Books-on-Wheels program for homebound

citizens. This collaboration with Meals-on-Wheels allows homebound patrons access to library materials. These folks fill out a form telling staff what kind of materials and what topics they enjoy and library staff then selects items to send to them monthly.



In 2014, 115 patrons served through this program.

Information Services includes our Genealogy department, where we serve people from all over the United States who want to know more about their family tree. We have been told by professionals in the field that we have the best genealogy collection between Fort Worth and El Paso.

Some of the sessions this year have included working on resumes, obtaining e-mail accounts, helping people learn how to use their tablet devices and/or smart phones for both library and non-library applications and helping people with basic computer skills.

Our Technical Services staff have diligently added thousands of items to the collection and managed our Hoopla and Overdrive offerings.





## South Branch - 1401 S. Danville

South Branch Library continues to thrive within the Abilene Public Library system. Children's services continue to expand, serving as our primary form of programming. Largely implemented by two (2) employees, along with the assistance of library staff and volunteers, FY14 afforded us with record high numbers.

Programming included a Space Camp series attracting an **371** guests; a hands-on Science Experiments series; and original Puppet Shows, of which the first program garnered our highest attendance numbers to date with **152** guests. With a children's staff, dedicated towards providing excellent service to youth and families, we will continue to expand our program lineup by establishing new activities to engage in.

The teen demographic remains the most elusive group to reach; however, our monthly programming has remained strong. Offering unique crafting sessions, which double as educational workshops, we continue to aim towards increasing services to teens by incorporating additional programs including the addition of a Teen Book Club in FY15 to promote literacy and popular young adult literature.

Adult programming is limited; however, we are able to maintain

strong numbers due to the continuing popularity of the Book-A-Librarian service. Averaging 40-50 monthly sessions, the community highly utilizes this teaching program. We conducted over **500** book-a-librarian sessions in 2014.

While maintaining a high-level of service to patrons in-house, we continue to offer regular promotions to attract the public to our facility. Such promotional activities included the introduction of the "Blind Date with a Book" literacy initiative; implementing a photo contest for youth to dress as their favorite character from Dr. Seuss stories and snap a photo of them reading their favorite Dr. Seuss book in the community, and more.

### South - At a Glance

**98,623** Patron Visits

**610** Children's Programs  
Attended By **17,029**  
(11.99% Increase  
over FY13)

**14** Tween/Teen Programs;  
Attended By **536**  
(144.75% Increase  
over FY13)

**557** Adult Programs  
Conducted; Attended  
By **978** (12.54%  
Increase over FY13)

We also expressed our creative side through grand installations of art that drove in new visitors. Art included a 9-foot tall igloo constructed from 300 recycled gallon milk jugs; the addition of a 10-foot long replica of Dinosaur Bob from the William Joyce series of children's books; the addition of pinatas in the form of characters from popular children's books, and more. Children's staff actively visited 20 childcare facilities to offer story time services to youth twice a week for each facility.

## Social Media and the Library

Q: Where can you find us?



A. Seven social media sites. We continue to be a leader in the use of social media marketing with our YouTube account being the most viewed public library account in Texas (more than library systems in Dallas, Houston and Austin). Additionally, our Instagram account was recognized by TechSoup for Libraries as one of four public libraries to follow, and our blog has been viewed over 120,000 times, with 363 entries added in FY14. This success has led to recognition from library systems in Denton and Plano which have called upon us to help establish their account.



## Mockingbird Branch - 1326 N. Mockingbird Ln.

The Mockingbird Branch had a wonderful and successful year of programming in 2014. Serving patrons of all ages, the branch has a robust following of community members frequenting our events. Serving the public at this location are staff members .

One of the most popular children's events in 2014 was "Fizz, Boom, Fun!" In connection with the Summer Reading Club entitled Fizz, Boom, Read children's staff hosted a series of highly successful hands-on science experiments. Topics included "Sink or Float" exposing children to the scientific principles of prediction, observation and exploration; "Magic Eruption" demonstrating the real-world application of chemical compounds; "Color Mixing" enlightening participants to the existence of the



color wheel and how our eyes view color along the spectrum; and "Root Beer Float Science" showing children that science happens at home all the time, especially in the kitchen. Average attendance at each program was 50-70 children.

In response to the opening of La Mexicana Meat Market, a Hispanic foods specialty store, Mockingbird staff embarked in a new direction offering Bilingual Storytime on rotating Thursday evenings during the summer. While attendance was low and ultimately proved unsustainable, this was a wonderful experience for staff to embrace their fledging Spanish language skills.

An Adult & Family event, for both individual adults as well as families with older aged children, was a new style of programming offered in 2014. It was a great success drawing together multigenerational families and ensuring that both adults and families were able to attend educational programming on a variety of topics. "Pawssitive Pets" hosted by certified dog trainer Stephanie De Young; "Stamp Collecting: Learn How to Get Started" offered by the Texas Golden Tongs Philatelic Society; and "Celebrate the Season" featuring local band Bad Karaoke is a sampling of what was offered.

We also saw continued success with traditional adult focused programming, which is primarily aimed at senior citizens aged 55 and above. With the goal of offering a new program once a month, staff were pleased that many topics were well attended. Successful programs this year included "Going Digital: Kindles & Nooks" with staff assisting patrons with one-on-one sessions immediately following the 2013 holiday season; "The Blessings of Liberty" a three dimensional display provided by Humanities Texas

during February and March; "Container Gardening" hosted by volunteers from the Texas Master Gardener's Association; "Healthy Grilling 101" featuring the talents of City of Abilene Nutritionist Lois Woods; and "The ABCs of Word"



which was a large-scale Microsoft Word class offered several times during the month of September.

Regardless of programming type, Mockingbird Branch Staff consistently work together to provide diverse, fun, educational and entertaining programming year round.



Anne Ellis (Librarian II), Debra Arnold- Higgins (LA I), Heather Carter (LA II) Darla Casella (Librarian I), Susannah Barrington (LA I)

# Customer Service/Children's Services



## Highlights from 2014

Our regular line-up for storytimes includes programs for all ages. We plan age-appropriate activities for each group and strive to entertain and educate our audiences. Parents are encouraged to fully participate with their children during the sessions. We conducted around 250 regular storytime programs during the 2014 fiscal year with over 4700 kids and 3600 adults attending.

In addition to our in-house programs, we make regular visits to childcare facilities around Abilene with our Out And About program. In 2014 the Main Library visited 635 classes and read to 10,647 children and 1,432 adults.

The Collecting Commas group is still going strong. This is a writing group for 10-17 year olds. This year, the members shared their poetry (a new format for several) at a poetry slam.

The summer reading club enrolled 4372 children and 972 teens. We passed out over 12,533 prizes to the kids who visited the library and over 1,100 prizes to visiting teens.

The Friends of The Library provided us with a great bonus this year in the form of our Reading Champion signs (earned by reading 10 books or 5 hours) earned a Reading Champion sign to put in their yard.

The Young Audiences performances were again a big hit over the summer. In 2014, the library played host to Nancy Burks Worchester, Key City Brass, The Hampstead Stage Company and Storyteller Shelly Tucker.

We also invited several groups in to provide new experiences for patrons. We had some talented dancers from Abilene Ballet, Joy Harsh from the Abilene Zoo (and her critters), and the Abilene Piper's Guild.

One of the highlights of the year was the workshop we conducted in cooperation with the National Center for Children's Literature (NCCIL) and the Children's Art and Literacy Festival (CALF). The staff of all 3 branches combined their talents to present "Dynamic Children's Programs" to an audience of over 50 library workers from across the state.

The library took part in the CALF events in June. The featured author this year was William Joyce. The activities downtown were wonderful despite a horrible hail storm that destroyed cars and roofs and sent people running for shelter. The library served as one of the reading and craft locations. Attendees listened to "The Man In The Moon" then created their own space ships with paper cups.



We were also honored to be chosen as one of the locations for a bronze statue featuring Jack Frost from Joyce's Guardians of Childhood Series.

We set up a display at the annual HEB Feast of Sharing again this year. We painted faces, passed out goodies, answered questions, and promoted the library.

The library held its first Lib-Con event and it was a huge success! Patrons all ages came for super-hero events and activities. There are plans to make this an annual event.

Kelsie Nygren, LA II in children's was selected to serve on the Texas Bluebonnet Award Selection Committee. She spent the year reviewing possible nominees and meeting with other committee members. Their choices have been posted and children across the state will be choosing their favorite during the next school year.

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## Facts About APL:

Print Volumes: 308,145

E-Books circulated via  
Overdrive: 101,256

Hoopla downloads:  
2,626

Total Circulation:  
791,383

Total visitors: 401,268

Interlibrary Loan:  
Borrowed: 5784  
Loaned: 2762



## Make & Take @ Your Library



## A Feast of Sharing



# FRIENDS OF THE ABILENE PUBLIC LIBRARY

A membership in the Friends of the Library is a great way to support your library! The Friends provide financial support and programming throughout the year to enhance the offerings of the library. Annually they hold a massive used book sale at the Abilene Civic Center to raise funds that purchase items not included in the Library budget. Each autumn they host the West Texas Book Festival, now preparing for its 15th year. Author series and other programs help Abilene maintain and promote quality of life and library services in Abilene. You may join by picking up a membership envelope at the library. New members are always welcome. The Friends also gratefully receive financial donations and encourage everyone to consider making a bequest to the Friends in their estate planning. Membership is tax deductible. Join the Friends for fun, participation and the love of books and reading!

## **Library Support in 2014**

The friends of the Library provided financial support to the library in 2014:

Travel support for staff training at the Texas Library Association Conference.

Provided a Kindle Fire grand prize for a lucky reading champion.

New staff polo shirts with Library Logo for casual Friday's

New Sound System for the Main Library Auditorium

Memorial for Ricki Brown and Ricki Brown Award

Purchased the Reading Champion yard signs

Staff appreciation Christmas meal.

Supported Hoopla with \$25,000.



*Thank you Friends -  
for all you do!*





## **Our Mission**

The mission of the Abilene Public Library is to provide materials, services, and programs to help community residents obtain information which meets their personal, educational, professional and recreational needs.

## **Library Locations and Hours:**

Main Library    202 Cedar St.  
South Branch    1401 S. Danville Rd.  
Mockingbird    1326 N. Mockingbird St.

Hours for all locations are:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday ~ 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Wednesday, Friday, Saturday ~ 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

## **Abilene Public Library**

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Abilene, TX 79601  
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325.676.6024 fax

<http://www.abilenetx.com/apl/>